

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 EB-08 AID-05 AGRE-00
/124 W

-----050170 210530Z /14

R 191725Z MAY 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1940
INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1332

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, MILI, CF, CU
SUBJECT: YHOMBY-OPANGO VISIT TO CUBA

1. USINT OFFICER, MAY 17, CALLED ON CONGOLESE COUNSELOR (MBOKO) FOR RUNDOWN ON MAY 7 THROUGH 13 YHOMBY-OPANGO VISIT TO CUBA. (FYI MBOKO IS SYMPATHETIC TO CUBANS AND HAS NOT BEEN FULLY RELIABLE SOURCE. END FYI). MBOKO CLAIMED THAT POSSIBILITY OF SHABA INCURSION HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN CASTRO AND YHOMBY-OPANGO AND THAT SHABA ACTIONS COME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE TO CONGOLESE. MBOKO STATED THAT, ALTHOUGH CONGOLESE HAVE HAD PROBLEMS WITH ZAIRE SINCE 1963 AND MOBUTU IS INVOLVED IN POLICY OF "MURDERING TRIBAL RIVALS" IN SHABA, BRAZZAVILLE DISPATCH OF SPECIAL EMISSARIES BOTH TO KINSHASA AND LUANDA SHOWS THAT CONGO STILL WISHES TO MAINTAIN POSTURE OF DIALOGUE TOWARD ZAIRE.

2. MBOKO CONTINUED, IN APPARENTLY SPECULATIVE VEIN, THAT SHABA INCURSION IS PROBABLY INTENDED AS REVENGE BY NETO FOR ZAIRE SUPPORT OF DISSIDENT ANGOLAN GROUPS. HE ADDED THAT
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NETO HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO GET EX-KATANGA GENDARMES OUT OF ANGOLA, AND INDEED, CONGO HAD SOME TIME AGO HELPED ZAIRE AND ANGOLA REACH AGREEMENT WHEREBY MOBUTU WOULD ACCEPT EX-KATANGESE BACK IN SHABA. DISSIDENT KATANGESE AMBITION TO SEIZE POWER IN SHABA, AND ULTIMATELY KINSHASA, NEATLY COINCIDES WITH NETO'S URGE TO RID HIMSELF OF KATANGESE, MOBOKO SAID.

3. MBOKO CLAIMED THAT YHOMBY-OPANGO HAD NOT ASKED FOR CUBAN MILITARY HELP DURING HIS VISIT HERE. HE SAID THAT CONGOLESE ARE DEFENDING BORDER AGAINST FLEC INCURSIONS FROM CABINDA, BUT THAT BRAZZABILLE DOES NOT NOW REQUIRE CUBAN HELP FOR THIS PURPOSE, EXCEPT FOR TRAINING OF CONGOLESE MILITARY CADRES--BOTH IN CONGO AND CUBA. HE CONTINUED THAT POINTE-NOIRE FACILITIES ARE USED TO PROVISION AND FUEL SHIPS CARRYING SUPPLIES TO CUBAN FORCES IN CABINDA. MBOKO ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT, IF AT FUTURE DATE, CONGOLESE COULD NOT DEFEND FRONTIER, THEY MIGHT ASK FOR OUTSIDE, INCLUDING CUBAN, HELP. (COMMENT: MBOKO APPEARED TO BE HINTING AT POSSIBLE CUBAN COMMITMENT ON BORDER HELP.)

4. MBOKO CONFIRMED THAT BULGARIA HAD CANCELLED INVITATION TO YHOMBY-OPANGO BECAUSE "BULGARIAN PRESIDENT WAS BUSY," BUT HE DREW NO SPECIAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT CUBA HAD RECEIVED YHOMBY WHICH SHOWED THAT SOVIET UNION IS NOT DISTURBED WITH CONGOLESE. (COMMENT: BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR AND SOVIET CHARGE WERE INVITED TO, AND ATTENDED, RECEPTION HOSTED BY YHOMBY-OPANGO HERE. CONGOLESE PRESIDENT, INDEED, WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO DEFINE CONGO AS "COMMUNIST STATE" DURING CASTRO MEDAL PRESENTATION CEREMONY HERE, MAY 8, BUT CUBAN TREATMENT OF YHOMBY-OPANGO VISIT, WHILE EXTREMELY CORDIAL, DID NOT APPROXIMATE IN ANY WAY RECEPTION OFFERED TO MENGISTU TWO WEEKS BEFORE.)
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5. ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, MBOKO SAID THAT NEW CUBAN-CONGOLESE AGREEMENT ON "RURAL ECONOMY" COOPERATION IS PRINCIPALLY AIMED AT FURTHER ACCELERATING EXISTING DAIRY CATTLE COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY IN GENETIC MIXING OF CUBAN AND CONGOLESE COWS. CUBANS ALSO SAID THAT THEY WOULD HELP, WITHIN THEIR RESTRICTED POSSIBILITIES, IN DEVELOPMENT, RESTORATION, AND REPAIR OF CONGOLESE SUGAR AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY.

6. MBOKO ADDED THAT CUBAN AGREEMENT TO DELIVER SOME 15 THOUSAND TONS OF SUGAR IN 1978-79 (MBOKO WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THIS IS ANNUAL OR TWO-YEAR FIGURE), AT APPARENTLY CONCESSIONAL PRICES, IS INTENDED TO TIDE CONGO OVER UNTIL CURRENTLY BROKEN DOWN SUGAR MILL CAN BE REPAIRED.

7. IN ADDITION TO AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION BETWEEN TWO FOREIGN MINISTRIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF UNBRELLA INTERGOVERNMENTAL MIXED COMMISSION, MBOKO SAID THAT YHOMBY-OPANGO VISIT REAFFIRMED DESIRABILITY OF CONTINUING TIES AND EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND CARDRES (FOR TRAINING) BETWEEN OFFICIAL PARTIES AND MASS ORGANIZATION OF CONGO AND CUBA.

8. CONGOLESE-CUBAN COMMUNIQUE, ISSUED HERE MAY 12, CONTAINS FOLLOWING POINTS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST FROM HAVANA PERSPECTIVE:

--BOTH PARTIES CONDEMNED US EMBARGO AND GUANTANAMO.

--BOTH PARTIES RECOGNIZED "SUCSESSES" OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, AND PARTICULARLY SOVIET UNION, IN CREATING FAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION AND REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. BOTH PRAISED UNITY BETWEEN LIBERATION FORCES AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

--BOTH SUPPORTED REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN ETHIOPIA AND DEMANDED RESPECT FOR ETHIOPIAN UNITY, BUT NO SPECIFIC MENTION WAS MADE OF CUBAN

MILITARY HELP OR MILITARY ACTION IN ERITREA.

--BOTH ENDORSED MPLA AND NETO PERSONALLY AND CONDEMNED FNLA, UNITA, AND FLEC, BUT NO MENTION WAS MADE OF ZAIRE.

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--ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, BOTH SUPPORTED PATRIOTIC FRONT, SWAPO, AND ANC, DENOUNCED "IMPERIALIST MANEUVERS, AND REAFFIRMED DEFENSIVE SOLIDARITY WITH FRONT LINE, PARTICULARLY ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, ZAMBIA AND BOTSWANA.

9. COMMENT: COONGOLESE AMBASSADOR HERE HAS BEEN VERY FIRM IN DESCRIBING YHOMBY-OPANGO AS MAN WHO IS OPEN TOWARD COOPERATION WITH WEST. MBOKO ENDED HIS PRESENTATION, MAY 17, BY SAYING THAT, WHILE CONGO WAS TRYING TO GET HELP FROM CUBA, IT WAS EXPECTING MORE HELP FROM US IN YHOMBY-OPANGO'S EFFORT TO SPUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, INVASIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978HAVANA01332
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780213-0918
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780541/aaaabify.tel
Line Count: 147
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3c498c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2640955
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: YHOMBY-OPANGO VISIT TO CUBA
TAGS: PDEV, MILI, MOPS, CF, CU, (YHOMBY-OPANGO, JOACHIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3c498c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014